



**Federal Bureau
of Investigation**



**U.S. Attorney's
Office**



**Bureau of Alcohol,
Tobacco, Firearms
and Explosives**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DEFENDANT CONVICTED OF ATTEMPTED PRODUCTION OF RICIN AND MULTIPLE WEAPONS OFFENSES

PHOENIX , Ariz. - Defendant Denys Ray Hughes, 59, of Phoenix, Arizona, was found guilty of Attempted Production of a Biological Toxin for Use as a Weapon, and Possession of an Unregistered Destructive Device and Possession of an Unregistered Silencer, by a federal jury in Phoenix. The case was tried before United States District Court Judge Earl H. Carroll from June 20, 2006 until June 30, 2006. The defendant remained in custody after trial. Sentencing is set for October 2, 2006.

United States Attorney Paul K. Charlton stated, "Law enforcement intercepted and disrupted Mr. Hughes' plans to use ricin as a weapon. We are grateful to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Russell County Sheriff's Department in Kansas and the Vilas County Sheriff's Dept. Eagle River, Wisconsin for their outstanding work on this case."

John E. Lewis, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI, Phoenix Division stated, "This case accentuates the emphasis of the FBI's mission to prevent any act that would harm the citizens of this country. The FBI appreciates a strong partnership with the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives so that resources within our agencies can effectively continue to seek out those who would manufacture, possess and tragically use any weapon of mass destruction."

William D. Newell, Special Agent in Charge for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosive (ATF), stated, "This investigation is a superb example of the increased awareness and cooperation of our state, local and federal agencies."

The evidence at trial showed defendant grew approximately nine castor bean plants, and cultivated thousands of their seeds, which contain the toxin, ricin. Defendant further possessed the necessary precursor materials, as well as written instructions for extracting the toxin. The government also proved at trial that defendant possessed a destructive device, a pipe bomb, and multiple silencers.

A conviction for Attempted Production of a Biological Toxin for Use a Weapon carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, \$ 250,000 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, Judge Earl H. Carroll will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

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The investigation leading to the guilty verdict was conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, jointly with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Additionally, the Russell County Sheriff's Department in Kansas and the Vilas County Sheriff's Dept. Eagle River, Wisconsin, also assisted on the case.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-759-PHX-EHC
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